

DRUG ABUSE PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- Early in 1981, President Reagan began a major campaign against drug abuse and drug trafficking, warning that, if we failed to act, we were running the risk of losing a great part of a whole generation.
- The President's comprehensive program has five elements:
 - International cooperation,
 - Drug law enforcement,
 - Education and prevention,
 - Medical treatment, and
 - Research.
- Also included was a major initiative to rid our military of drug abuse.
- President Reagan established a tough foreign policy to cut off drugs at their source.
- In 1981, one country was eradicating narcotic plants. Today, we have 14 countries and all 50 states eradicating narcotic plants (coca bush, opium poppies, and marijuana production).
- Operation "Blast Furnace" in Bolivia is an example of how the U.S. military is helping foreign police attack the drug traffic.
- The Administration has over 20 Federal agencies, including the military, involved in fighting the drug traffic.
- In early 1982, President Reagan put the Vice President in charge of the South Florida Task Force and, in 1983, of our entire border area.
- In 1981, Mrs. Reagan and others began a major program to increase public awareness of the dangers of drug abuse and to get people involved in helping young people say no to drugs. There are now over 10,000 "Just Say No" Clubs.
- ~~Private sector support and involvement have brought many~~ more resources to the prevention effort than Federal dollars could ever buy.
- Our children are showing us that they are willing and able to say "no" to drugs.
 - The number of high school seniors who use marijuana on a daily basis dropped from 1 in 11 in 1980 to 1 in 20 in 1984-85.

- Surveys show a steady decline in teenage acceptance of marijuana. In 1985, 73 percent of the teenagers surveyed by Gallup believed that possession of small amounts of marijuana should be treated as a criminal offense, compared to 44 percent in 1979.
- Today, there are a lot more people who believe we can stop drug abuse and who are committed to doing something about it. Our young people are saying "no" with confidence, and our military has reduced the use of illegal drugs by over 65 percent since 1981.
- Each of these success stories have a common thread -- Drug abuse will not be tolerated.
- We have reached a new plateau with a new set of opportunities. We are going to pursue the limits of possibility in eliminating drug abuse. We are going to make it clear that we are no longer willing to tolerate illegal drugs in our society. We will not tolerate the drugs, we will not tolerate the dealers, and we will not tolerate the users.

NEW INITIATIVES

- The President has met with the Cabinet to discuss six areas in which the Administration can undertake new initiatives. Our immediate goal is at least a 50 percent reduction in the use of illegal drugs within three years.

We must first intensify our efforts to ensure a drug-free workplace for each American.

- The President is alarmed to hear that 10-20 percent of the people now attempting to enter the workplace are using illicit drugs, some of them on the job.
- All industries are affected, from blue collar workers to top executives. This includes construction, manufacturing, and transportation, the stock exchange, the nuclear industry, lawyers, physicians -- all of society.
- We must all take action. And there is something which can be done. U.S. industry and the military are the leaders, ~~and these efforts need to be expanded.~~
- Those of us in government, as public servants, must do everything possible to ensure the public trust and to fight drug abuse.

- The President is therefore establishing an objective for a drug-free Federal workplace, and he will be encouraging state and local government leaders to do the same.

Secondly, we are establishing a goal of drug-free schools.

- Although most drug use by young people has been declining since the late 1970's, the use of cocaine has increased.
- Our children must be protected from this threat to their lives. Again, something can be done.
- Schools such as Northside High School in Atlanta have proven that, when parents, schools and communities work together, drugs can be stopped.
- President Reagan is asking all schools to establish a policy of being drug-free. Our young people are the future. Our schools, elementary through college level, must cease to be havens and training grounds for drug use and trafficking.
- Secretary Bennett has moved aggressively and will continue to work with schools at all levels.
- Programs for young people should emphasize excellence in education, health, grasping opportunities and overall well-being. One of the most effective programs has been encouraging young people to just say "no" to drugs.

Our third set of initiatives are in the area of drug treatment and research.

- We must ensure that drug users have treatment available to them so that they can stop using drugs and overcome as many of the health problems as possible.
- Secretary Bowen will be working with the states to develop and implement programs that treat specific drug-related health problems, including directing drug users into appropriate treatment.
- Special attention and treatment must be provided to intravenous drug users, especially because of the strong links to AIDS and the spread of this disease.
- ~~The Federal government must accelerate research in areas such as drug testing.~~

Our fourth set of initiatives will be to intensify international cooperation and commitment against drug abuse.

- Earlier this year, the President raised the priority of drug abuse as a threat to national security.
 - Narcotic traffickers not only damage the nation, but undermine friendly governments important to U.S. security through corruption, intimidation, and economic destabilization.
 - Drug money has a destabilizing effect on money supply and exchange markets.
- This fall, the President will hold discussions with U.S. Ambassadors to selected countries that produce drugs, serve as a transit point for drug shipments, or that have national drug problems.
- The Administration will expand the appropriate use of Defense resources to support drug interdiction and destruction of illegal refineries; and we will intensify efforts with other nations.

Our fifth goal is to expand our law enforcement effort.

- The Administration has increased law enforcement efforts aimed at the highest levels of the drug traffic to interdict the drugs as close to the source as possible. One action will be to expedite development of a comprehensive Southwest border initiative to stop illegal drug entry into the United States.
- We must also increase efforts to interdict the drugs as close to the user as possible. We will be working with state and local law enforcement and prosecutors to ensure arrest and stiff penalties for local drug sellers.

Our sixth and final initiative is perhaps the most important. We must each get involved in learning the truth about drugs and making illegal drug use unacceptable in our society.

- After five years of a massive public awareness campaign, more and more people know the facts, but there are still misconceptions and misunderstandings in existence.
 - The recent shock over the cocaine deaths of Len Bias and Don Rogers indicates that the information is not getting through to people, or they are not listening.

- Yes, cocaine can kill. Yes, marijuana is dangerous. No, there is no such thing as "recreational" or "responsible" use of illegal drugs. Ask the young people and the adults whose lives have been ruined.
- The answer to the drug abuse problem will ultimately come from individuals. Whether we are citizen or elected official, parent or professional, teacher or student, worker or employer, each of us must determine the appropriate stand to take, and then take it.
- Our stand may be as simple as not tolerating drug abuse at a party, or as complex as implementing a strong drug-free policy for a major corporation. Both approaches are effective and both are essential.
- The President is asking all citizens to join him and the First Lady in the national drug abuse awareness and prevention campaign. We each have a critical role to play and a major stake in the outcome.